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SOURCE I-ko Sheng-ch'an-ti Ch'eng-shih (A Productive City)

RESTORATION OF DAIREN AND
VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF CHINESE WORKERS

[Comment: This report summarizes Chapters I and VIII of a monograph entitled I-ko Sheng-ch'an-ti Ch'eng-shih (A Productive City) written by Chang P'ei and published by the Hsin-hua Shu-tien, East China branch, Shanghai, in June 1950. The monograph took its title from the first of ten articles on a variety of political and economic subjects which were originally published in the Mukden Tung-pai Jih-pao in the summer of 1949.

This report presents information on the restoration of Dairen following the take-over by the Soviet Red Army and the establishment of technical schools to train workers.]

Restoration of Production in Dairen

The Japanese occupied Dairen on 13 May 1906. In the 18 years following the coup of 18 September 1931, they exported annually through Dairen an average of 10 million tons of products of the Northeast, the most important of which were beans, coal, iron, and lumber.

On 22 August 1945, the Soviet Red Army took possession of the city. For some time following the occupation, due to the freezing of economic intercourse by the Nationalists at the instigation of the US, practically all industrial activity was paralyzed, causing great hardship to the people. It was not until October 1947 that the city was able to resume its industrial activities and begin to restore its economic well-being. The first industrial plants that were able to reopen were those Sino-Soviet joint enterprises that enjoyed the protection of the Red Army.

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To provide for the large number of unemployed, a fish net factory and hand-work shoe factory, each employing over 30,000 persons, were set in operation. As business gradually improved, there was an increase in the number of employed people and in their aggregate earnings. Then a new currency was introduced to take the place of the old inflated currency. As the new currency gained strength, it appreciated in value, and this was equivalent to an increase in the income of the people, which in turn resulted in further encouragement to business.

From 1946 to 1949 the number of people's cooperatives increased from two to 69, and the number of members from 740 to 78,265, or about one third of the population. These cooperatives, largely by eliminating the middleman's profits, helped to ease the financial difficulties of the people. Thieves, beggars, prostitutes, and vagrants were rounded up into compounds where they were fed and housed but required to do work and undergo training in some skill or trade to become self-supporting. The local government opened a workshop where many of them found employment. In 1949, no beggars were to be seen on the streets of Dairen.

The cardinal principle of the restoration of Dairen was to expand production and to organize and to educate the working people. The application of this principle called for the introduction of labor unions and through them the promotion of political and technical education. In 1946, only about 26,000 men were engaged in productive work; in 1949, this figure had risen to about 80,000 persons. The number still unemployed in 1949 was only about 3,000, mostly persons without any skill or trade; and it was expected that they would find employment shortly. Counting the families and dependents of workers, about 375,000 people were engaged in or supported by productive labor in 1949. Thus, it could truly be said that Dairen was a productive city; and that that was its most recent, greatest, and most significant characteristic.

A fact to be noted was that in Dairen, 28 percent of the workers employed in the productive enterprises were women. They were working not only in the light industries but in other occupations such as on the electric cars; and nine of them had completed their training and were working as locomotive engineers and firemen.

Establishment of Vocational Training Schools

To remedy the lack of technically trained workmen and staff members, many of the large industries in Dairen were conducting technical schools. They included the Chung-Ch'ang Railway Shops, the Far East Electrical Factory, the Dairen Transportation Company, the Shipbuilding and Repair Shop, and the Provincial Government Industrial Department. The courses of study in these schools varied in length from 6 months to 2 years, and the subjects of study and methods were closely related to the respective industries.

The technical school of the Chung-Ch'ang Railway Shops was opened in April 1946 and in 1949 was conducting its third course. At that time more than 1,000 men had studied in this school. In the 1949 group there were 509 men, including 109 selected students who had graduated from the preceding course and were held over for another year of advanced training. Ten or more youths in the student body were the sons of workmen in the shops. They were expected to be able to take their places as skilled workers within a short time after graduation.

The superintendent of the shops was the director of the school. The dean was a man 33 years old with 17 years of experience in the shops. Posted in the classrooms was the following statement of the school's purposes and aims:

"To raise the ideological and cultural level of the students and to enable them to acquire the ability to serve the railways of the New Democracy."

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The weekly curriculum of the 2-year-course students was: algebra 5 periods, physics 2 periods, Chinese literature 2 periods, engineering 2 periods, politics 3 periods. The rest of the time was devoted to practical work in the shops. The classes in politics included the nature of Communism, current events, the imitation of the Soviet Union, labor and production, history of social development, and the recent history of China. This school used the ten laboratories formerly used by the Japanese for the training of technicians. In the exhibit room were all sorts of pictures, charts, and models of objects pertaining to railways.

The technical school of the Dairen Transportation Company followed much the same pattern. It had in training 50 selected motormen and trainmen who had previously taken a course in general educational subjects in leisure time evening classes. In the forenoons they studied physics, chemistry, and algebra. The afternoons were spent in the workshops, the forge room, on lathe work, winding armatures, studying motors, transformers, the laying of tracks, and stringing line wires. Among the 50 students were four girls, three of whom were specializing in thread-cutting lathe work, and one on the winding of armatures.

The local government Department of Industry was conducting schools to train skilled workers for the various industrial plants under its management, including spinning and weaving, chemistry, machinery, commercial bookkeeping, and cost accounting. In these classes 360 students are enrolled. Each course lasted 6 months. While in training, the students continued to receive their regular wages. In the Railway Shops school, the second-year course students received 2,400 yuan per month; the first-year course students received 2,100 yuan per month; and, in addition, 16 kilograms of grain and the privilege of purchasing miscellaneous articles at low prices in the company store.

These training schools achieved good results. Among the 187 students that graduated from the first class in the Railway Shops school, 50 who previously were ordinary unskilled laborers with no education were graded as technicians in 1949; and many in classes in 1949 had already attained the rank of fifth grade skilled workers. It was suggested that companies should set apart adequate funds for the support of these technical training schools, and that this expenditure should be a recognized part of the cost of production.

The mayor of Dairen, Mao Ta-hsun, was formerly manager of the Dairen Transportation Company and conducted technical training classes. As a firm believer in their value, it was said that he intended to establish a municipal trade school with a 3-year course of study, and had secured the funds for it.

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